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Crocodile fears at Leeuwfontein RDP



The Sekhukhune District Municipality has issued a stern warning to Leeuwfontein Township residents to be on a look-out of a crocodile that was spotted in the township.

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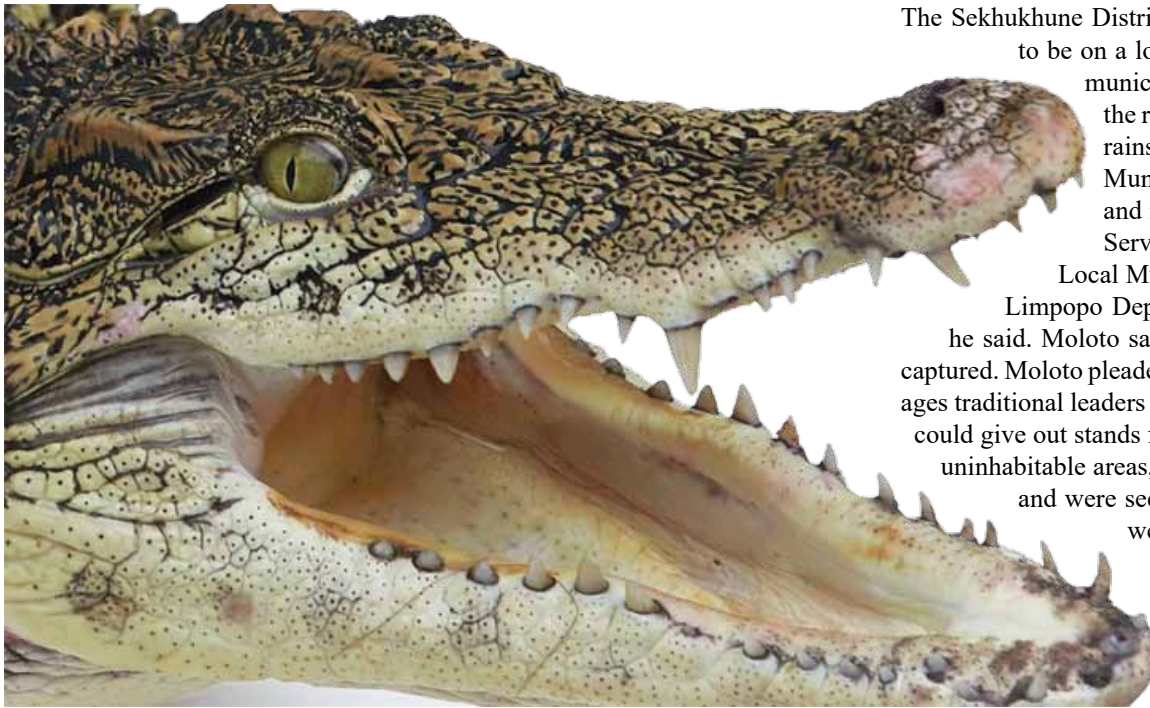
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Crocodile fears at Leeuwfontein RDP



The Sekhukhune District Municipality has issued a stern warning to Leeuwfontein Township residents to be on a look-out of a crocodile that was spotted in the township. According to the district municipality, the reptile was spotted nearby Leeuwfontein RDP, inside a pond in a yard in the residential area. "The pond covers five yards of the section and following the recent rains, some of the yards are still flooded," said Moloko Moloto, Sekhukhune District Municipality Spokesperson. He said the reptile was seen by one of the houses' owner and it has already eaten ducks and chickens of locals. "Officials from the Community Services Departments of both Sekhukhune District Municipality and Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, along with officials from the World Life Trade & Regulation from the Limpopo Department of Environment and Tourism are working on capturing the crocodile," he said. Moloto said residents are urged to be on high alert, especially at night, until the reptile is captured. Moloto pleaded with parents and guardians to safeguard children. "The municipality also encourages traditional leaders to first get in touch with ward councillors and the district municipality before they could give out stands for human settlement. This will assist in avoiding to settle people on wetlands and uninhabitable areas," he said. However, residents alleged that about three crocodiles are on the loose and were seen in the area recently. According to residents, there is a believe that the reptiles were brought in the area by residents who are fishing in the nearby crocodile infested rivers and dams. "They are using fishing nets in the Olifants River and Arabi Dam, not being aware that they also carry small crocodiles with them when going home. It is a pity that the crocodiles are now haunting the area putting the lives of residents in danger," said a resident.

Worrisome medical negligence legal claims in Limpopo

According to the Democratic Alliance (DA) in Limpopo, the province's medical negligence litigation claims threaten to bring the Limpopo Health Department on its knees.

The party said it is deeply concerned by the province's contingent liabilities of R14,063 Billion that stems from medico legal cases against the department. "The DA will write to the Public Service Commission to investigate the medico-legal crisis the province is currently facing," said Risham Maharaj DA Limpopo Spokesperson for Health. Maharaj revealed that 305 cases, amounting to R3,006 Billion were reported in Sekhukhune District Municipality, Vhembe District health facilities have 500 medico legal cases amounting to R5,251 Billion, Capricorn District has 330 claims amounting to R2,356 Billion, Mopani District has 322 cases amounting R2,683 Billion and Waterberg District has 118 cases amounting to R766,053 Million. "The largest contributing hospitals to the medical negligence cases are Tshilidzini Hospital with R1, 497 Billion, Donald Fraser Hospital with R1 Billion, Mankweng Hospital with R764 Million, Pietersburg Hospital with R625 Million, Philadelphia Hospital with R652 Million and Nkhensani Hospital with R600 Million. These medico legal cases could potentially cripple the Department of Health if the courts were to make rulings that the department was negligent and should pay," he said.

Maharaj informed that the challenge with the cases is that neither the department, nor the provincial administration have a budget to settle these cases if judgment was not in favour of the department in court. "The factors related to the root causes of the high rate of litigation against

the department are critical staff shortages in high-risk areas, lack of professionalism, incompetence, poor communication and staff attitude, lack of equipment, lost records, failure to obtain informed consent, missed diagnosis, failure to conduct basic investigations and system errors," Maharaj said. Furthermore, Maharaj said the DA has noted that the Limpopo Department of Health has established a turnaround strategy to deal with the litigations against the department, however, the party believes that the strategy will remain a plan on a paper with no real solutions to the reckless behaviour by numerous department officials due to non-accountability. "The number of claims relating to medical negligence have sharply escalated over the years. The rising amount of claims in Limpopo shows that hospital conditions in the province are not improving and are offering sub standard services to the people of Limpopo," emphasized Maharaj.

Maharaj cited that it is clear that firm steps are needed to improve the quality of care in the province's hospitals to ensure they are functional and do not inflict further pain and injury on patients. "The failure by Limpopo MEC for Health, Phophi Ramathuba, and her department to address litigation claims will result in the deterioration and further reduction of care in our healthcare system," he said.



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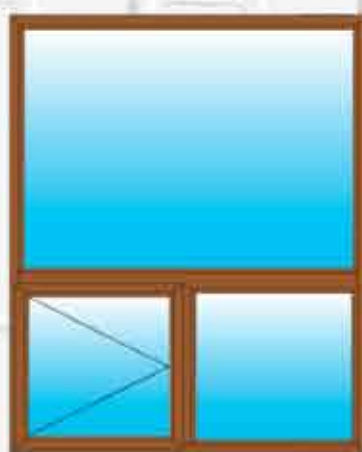
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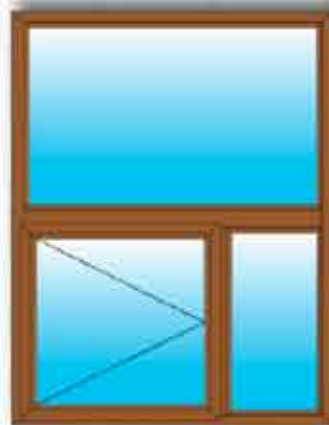
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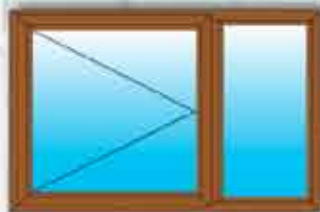
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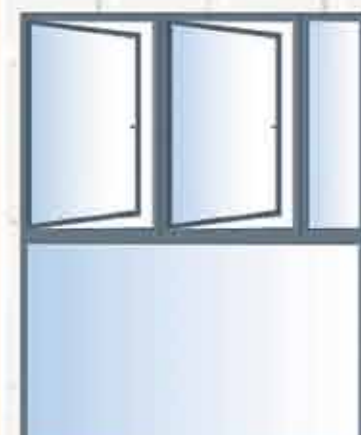
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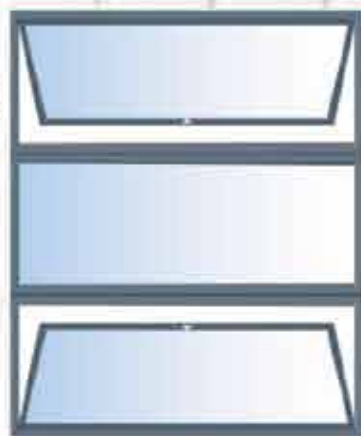
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SDM Mayor appointments new MMCs

The new Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr Julia Mathebe, has recently appointed new Members of Mayoral Committee (MMCs), to steer the political budget in different portfolios. Mathebe announced that MMC MalekeMokganyetji will be responsible for Budget and Treasury Portfolio, MMC BaatsebaLeshaba to be responsible for the Planning and Economic Development Department and MMC Bela Kupa will be responsible for the Infrastructure and Water Services. According to the district municipality, the appointments were made as is required by Section 153 of the Constitution that a municipality must structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community. The appointments are also empowered by Section 4 of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, wherein, stipulating that the executive mayor must establish a budget steering committee. This committee's role is to provide technical assistance to the executive mayor in discharging her responsibilities set out in section 53 of the Municipal Finance Management Act.

The responsibilities include providing political guidance to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget processes and the priorities that must guide the preparation of the budget, ensuring the budget gets approved before 1 July, and that there's a Service Delivery & Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP).

Other members of the committee were appointed before and include the municipal manager, chief financial officer and senior officials. Executive Mayor Mathebe during the appointment process emphasised that all and one must work to ensure that the municipality provides the important services that residents of Sekhukhune require.



Cllr Julia Mathebe, Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, has appointed three MMCs to steer the political budget in the district municipality.

A 100km walk to fight for 2021 NSFAS outstanding payments



Some of the students who embarked on the 100km journey to lodge their NSFAS complaints with the Department of Higher Education.

A group of students from Sekhukhune TVET College in CS Barlow Campus, Motetema, have arrived at the offices of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHED) in Pretoria, on Wednesday 16 February after walking for more than 100km to lodge their complaint in relation to the college's poor allocation of their National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding. The students were planning to meet Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Dr Blade Nzimande to raise their complaints. The worried students claim the college has failed to pay their outstanding funding for the Trimester 2,3 and Semester 2 in the 2021 academic year. The students said they are concerned that the new financial year is starting in March and are worried that they will be losing their outstanding funding for the 2021 financial year. A student, Sammy Moela, said a number of students were urged to drop-out in 2021 after experiencing a shortage of NSFAS allowances to pay for their transportation, food and accommodation. "Unfortunately no one attended to us when we arrived at the DHET offices. We have waited outside the premises and demanded to be addressed by Minister Blade Nzimande or senior officials. Instead, they sent an intern employee to come and address us, which is a clear indication that we were undermined," he said. Moela said they were informed by the intern that DHET does not handle NSFAS issues and they rather direct their complaints to the relevant department. "We are disappointed with their response as this is badly affecting the future of students. The majority have not registered for distance learning, meaning they have to attend their classes directly from the

campus. However, that could not happen because they don't have money for traveling, food and accommodation," he said. Moela vowed that students will be approaching other government departments until the issue of the outstanding allocation is resolved. Sekhukhune TVET College Marketing Officer, Abicky Kgolane, was not available for a comment by not responding to phone calls made by the Dispatch Newspaper. Kgolanedid also not respond to messages sent by the publication requesting his comment.

New SDM Executive Mayor meets traditional leadership

Directly from her first Mayoral Committee meeting she presided over since her election as Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality (SDM), Cllr Julia Lata Mathebe has on Friday 18 February, convened a session with the Local House of Traditional Leaders and Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa. The session was aimed to develop a partnership with the new mayor to tackle challenges facing the district municipality, water scarcity in main. Mathebe has during the session, assured Traditional Leaders that, the institution of traditional leadership, which is recognised by the Constitution and is the custodian of vast parts of Sekhukhune District, is an important stakeholder of the district municipality. "We strive to ensure that communities, that traditional leaders govern, receive portable water. It is therefore important that as local government and traditional leaders, we work together. Without your support and partnership, we will not succeed," Mathebe said. Although the session was more of a meet and greet, the executive mayor committed that there will be subsequent formal meetings with traditional leaders, to discuss issues such as water service infrastructure, mining activity and the FetakgomoTubatse Special Economic Zone among others. The traditional leaders appreciated the executive mayor's engagement and vowed to support her and the mayoral committee that she leads.




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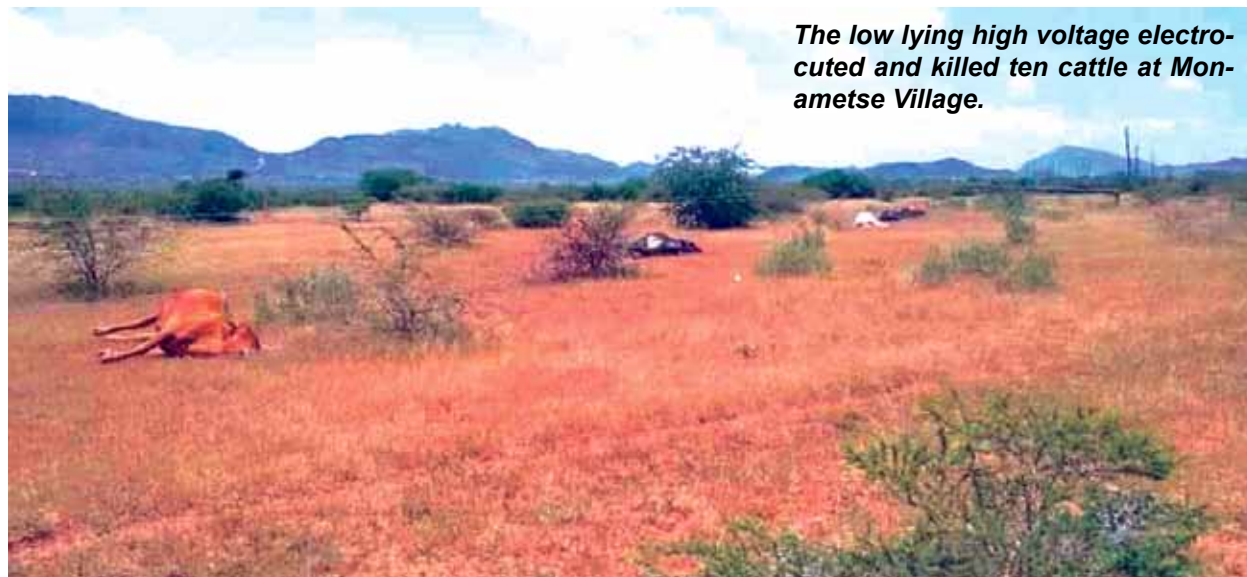


Collapsed high voltage cable electrocutes ten cattle

Local farmers in Monametse Village outside Jane Furse are devastated after ten cattle were electrocuted by low lying electricity wires, meant to electrify Bokoni Platinum Mine in the village. The unfortunate incident happened on Monday 21 February 2021 when the cattle were trying to find their way home. Following the shocking incident, residents are now worried about their safety and that of their children. A community leader, Sello Kupa, told the Dispatch Newspaper that the electrification project started on Monday 14 February from the Malomany Power Station to Bokoni Platinum Mine shafts in Brakfontein. "Since the project started, the high voltage powerline is lying on the ground posing risk to community members," said Kupa. He added that residents were not aware that the wires had power until the livestock was electrocuted. "We have seen too many people passing the same area everyday. The main concern is our children because they will end up playing with the live wires not knowing the danger that is posed by them," he said.

Kupa said an urgent community meeting will be convened with the mine to find a safe solution and also to determine the cost of the loss. "The community is angry and will demand answers from both Eskom and the mining company," he said. A senior official at Bokoni Platinum Mine, who did not want to be named, citing that he fears for his life, said the low lying powerline that electrocuted the livestock is not part of the

mining project. "The cable belongs to Eskom and does not form part of Bokoni Platinum Mine projects. It is alleged that the powerline poles were stolen by vandals, which led to the cable to lie low and pose risk to residents and livestock," he said.



The low lying high voltage electrocuted and killed ten cattle at Monametse Village.

Duo nabbed after shootout with police

Two suspects were arrested at a funeral in Siyabuswa, following a shootout incident with the police. The duo was arrested on Saturday 19 February. According to Brigadier Selvy Mohlala, Mpumalanga Provincial Police Spokesperson, a multidisciplinary team of police members, consisting of the National Intervention Unit, TRT, Vispol, POPS, Crime Intelligence, was monitoring a funeral of Klaas Motswadira, who was shot the previous weekend. "The funeral was attended by about 600 people and mostly youth. It is alleged that during the burial proceedings at the cemetery, some attendees started shooting in the air with pistols and rifles. Fortunately no one was injured in that process," he said. Mohlala added that it is alleged that when the convoy left the cemetery going back home, the same attendees continued shooting randomly in the air and were spotted by National Intervention Unit (NIU) members. "The members tried to stop them but instead, the suspects shot at them and then speed off. A vehicle chase was ensued and the suspects lost control of their vehicle and collided with a wall at Siyabuswa E and were arrested," explained Mohlala. He said the owner of the wall also laid charges against the driver of the vehicle. "The vehicle of the suspects, a Ford Ranger Wildtrack, was searched and one pistol with a filed serial number and one empty magazine was recovered. The firearm will be subjected to a ballistic testing to verify if it was not used in the commission of any crime," Mohlala informed. He said the arrested suspects, a 40-year-old man from Ramokgeletsana Village and 36-year-old male from Siyabuswa will appear before the Mdtjane Magistrate's Court soon, facing charges of possession of unlicensed firearm, discharging a firearm in public, attempted murder, malicious damage to property, and reckless and negligence driving. The Provincial Commissioner of the Police in Mpumalanga, General Semakaleng Manamela, discouraged the discharging of firearms in public for no apparent reason as it poses danger to the community. She further lamented on the immoral behavior of disrespecting the cemetery and those who have lost their loved ones. Manamela has also appreciated the sterling work displayed by the police in apprehending suspects after the shootout.



The Ford Ranger Wildtrack vehicle that was seized from the suspects who were engaging in a shootout with police members at Siyabuswa.



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DA to question shocking high crime rate in Limpopo

The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Limpopo said it is going to submit a detailed questions for written response on all SAPS resources, to the MEC for Community Safety, Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, following the release of the latest crime statistics.

The party said it is concerned that Limpopo is the only province that showed an increase in crime for the period of 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021. This is according to the crime statistics for the Third Quarter of 2021, as released by Police Minister General Bheki Cele on 18 November 2021, indicating that an overall crime in Limpopo was on the increase while the national average indicated a decline in crime of 2.5 percentage points. "We do take note of the decrease in sexual offences by 7.6 percentage points during the period under review, but we are concerned about the sharp increase in murders which spiked with 22.4 percentage points and attempted murder which showed an increase of 38.2 percentage points," said DA Provincial Spokesperson on Community Safety, Katlego Suzan Phala. Phala said they are concerned that robberies at non-residential premises and of cash in transit heists increased by 21.6 and 25 percentage points respectively. "A major concern is the downward trend of crimes detected as a result of police action. The SAPS in Limpopo made only 3 428 arrests through police action in the quarter under review, 4 192 arrests less than in the same period last year made," she said. Phala indicated that the DA has learned that some of the satellite police stations in the province are under-resourced with not a single police vehicle available during the day to respond to crime. "This is not an isolated case, our rural police stations are mostly under-resourced and under capacitated. Without increased resources, the SAPS in Limpopo cannot expect a turnaround in the crime statistics and our communities will remain unsafe," Phala said. She added that during the Third Quarter, 7 people were either attempted to be murdered or murdered in Limpopo daily, the highest during the last five years.

"Most murders occur in public spaces. With increased police visibility and police action, we are confident that murders will decrease. We call on MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya to take ownership of her department to ensure that our communities are safe," she said.

N11 fatal crash claims six lives

Six people died in a fatal road accident that occurred on the N11 road between Groblersdal and Middelburg on Monday 21 February.

The accident occurred towards the Loskop Dam in the late hours. Mpumalanga Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (DCSSL) Spokesperson, Moeti Mmusi, said the victims died when an truck and a sedan collided head. "All the six occupants in the sedan died on the accident scene. They include the driver and a toddler who was about one-year-old," Mmusi said. Mmusi said the truck was coming from the Middelburg direction and the sedan was coming from the opposite direction. "The exact cause of the accident is yet to be established and identification of the deceased is still underway," he said. Mpumalanga MEC for DCSSL, Vusi Shongwe is once more calling on motorists to be cautious on the road. "We have lost many lives on the road within a short space of time, this can never be accepted," he said. Shongwe



said they are worried that the increasing number of fatalities on the Mpumalanga roads is alarming. "It is therefore important for everyone who uses the road to be an active participant in the fight against lawlessness and road crashes. Government alone cannot win the fight against road carnage.

We need everyone to play their part, by always adhering to the rules of the road and by reporting those who disregard the law," he said. Meanwhile, the MEC sent his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased.

Mpumalanga MEC for DCSSL, Vusi Shongwe, has called for motorists to be cautious following an increase of fatal accidents in the province.

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Bumazi Properties donates to destitute learners

A number of destitute pupils from Ramanare Primary School in Tafelkop were overjoyed after receiving a full school uniform, thanks to Bumazi Properties from Bareki Mall in Groblersdal.

The gesture was delivered at the school's premises in on Monday 14 February. Situated at the village's Stadium View Section, Ramanare Primary is under-resourced and accommodating mainly learners coming from poor family backgrounds. The school was established in 2016 and accommodates 220 learners and still lacks a lot of resources as it was recently opened. Ramanare is currently operating in mobile classrooms, which were provided by government when the school was established in 2016. Bumazi Properties representative, Mtshelwa Sifiso Kabini, said the initiative is aiming to give back to the poor communities in the villages. "We wanted to show that we care about our community. I hope the donation will play an important part in the education of the pupils. I am from the same community and know the struggle faced by many parents who cannot afford to buy their children a proper school uniform. Charity begins at home," he said.

Kabini said the donation is part of Bumazi Properties and Costa Zervas Projects initiative, seeking to restore the dignity of underprivileged pupils at the primary school. "Early in 2021, we donated stationery for grade 1 and 2, with a believe that the little budget we have has to be ploughed back to the community initiative, helping our future leaders by getting them the correct tools to build a better tomorrow. During that year, we donated A5 quad margins books, pencils, glue sticks and



Pupils of Ramanare Primary School in Tafelkop after receiving their full school uniform donations from Bumazi Properties and Costa Zervas Projects.

colouring pencils," he said. Kabini indicated that after realizing that more learners are still in need, in 2022, the two companies decided to stretch their helping hand and donate more to the school. "We wanted to also show that our community does come first and requested Ramanare Primary School principal to provide us with a list of learners who are struggling

with school uniforms. We received a list of eleven children. The uniform includes a pair of shoes, grey socks, white shirts, boys trousers and girls' dresses. The uniform recipients were eight boys and three girls," Kabini said. Kabini indicated that as part of the donation, the companies also handed-over stationery to all grades at the school.

The stationery includes 240 A4 exercise books, 240 mathematics books, 240 pencils, 240 rulers, 200 erasers, 200 metal sharpeners, 200 scissors, 200 glue sticks.

Kabini said they were delighted to see how happy the learners were, adding that companies will be making other donations to Ramanare and the other local schools in the near future.

Aggrieved residents erect speed humps on killer road

About thirty residents from Riverside Village outside Jane Furse were, on Thursday 17 February, arrested by the police after blockading the main road and erecting unauthorized speed humps to slow down traffic, following an incident where a community member was knocked down by a speeding vehicle and died. After the community member was killed by a speeding vehicle, about fifty residents mobilized at the spot where the incident happened and started to erect the speed humps. It is alleged that the driver of the vehicle that instantly killed the victim fled immediately after the incident. The police were called to the scene resulting in the arrests of more than 30 residents who were later released and currently undergoing court appearances. A resident, who did not want to be named, said they have been pleading with Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality to erect proper speed humps without any success. "It is tiring to see people losing their lives on that road without the municipality's intervention to insure that the lives of residents are spared. We build our own speed humps for the sake of safety of residents and children who are being hit by speeding motorists," he said. He said it is worrisome because most of the accidents happening on the road are hit and run incidents. "The perpetrators are either drunk or not authorized to drive vehicles, which is the reason most of them run away after hitting the residents," he said. According to the resident, the community will be returning to erect the speed humps until the municipality appoints a contractor to build proper speed

bumps. "Drivers are reckless when driving on this road. We have lost many residents and could not afford to lose more. We are aware that the speed humps we erected will be washed away by the rain as it is only made with soil and stones, however, we will be maintaining

them until proper ones are built," he said. Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality Spokesperson, Lemson Moropjane, said the incidents are taking place on a provincial road, which is not the responsibility of the local municipality. "Our responsibility as the local municipality

is only on the internal roads. I can advise the complaining residents to direct their complaints to the provincial department of roads," he said. The Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure was not immediately available for a comment.





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Sekhukhune women football team enters provincial selections



The Sekhukhune women's football team will partake in the provincial selection for the high performance centre scholarship in the University of Pretoria.

The SAFA Sekhukhune Football League will on Saturday 26 February send its under-15 and under 17 women's football teams to represent the region on provincial level.

The two age group teams will be participating with girls from other regions in the province to get an opportunity to gain entry in the high performance centre of the University of Pretoria. Frank Maredi, SAFA Sekhukhune Football League Coordinator, said the team is formed by eighteen dedicated girls coming from their women football league that was recently added to their programme. "We are confident that our girls will be representing the region with honour and hopefully, they will be selected to get the scholarship to be accommodated in the University of Pretoria's high performance centre," he said. Maredi said the team is well prepared since the regional selections on 5 December 2021. "To ensure that the team is well-prepared, we have assigned Mathilda Makunyane who is a professional coach to take reigns since December. Our goal is to uplift our women football players to be competitive on provincial and national level," he said.

Maredi added having to put some fine touches to their preparations, friendly matches with the SASOL League based teams were organized for their players to gain fitness, meanwhile they are waiting for the provincial selections to take place. "Their performance with SASOL League teams was impressive and this is an indication that we are making strides to develop women football in the region. The strenuous training sessions with a professional woman coach has also played an important role to the players," he said.

However, Maredi has called on other women football teams from Sekhukhune Villages to come and join the league. "We need as many women football teams as possible to come join the league with an objective to stretch it further," he said. Meanwhile Maredi said the men regional league is going as planned from all the four streams from all local municipalities in Sekhukhune. "The men's league has just entered its second round two weeks ago and running smoothly as we speak. We are happy that the teams are looking very organized and perform consistently excellent since the beginning of the second round," he said.

Maredi said even when spectators are still restricted to attend the matches due to Covid-19 regulations, the players are now used to the new normal, showing determination to reach their greatest potential in the field of play.

Year-long Covid-19 vaccination Programme in Limpopo



The Limpopo Department of Health has on 18 February marked exactly a year since the commencement of the Covid-19 vaccination programme of the health care workers.

The programme, which started under the Sisonke Study, has seen almost 30 000 healthcare workers receiving their vaccine jabs. According to the department, over 17 000 healthcare workers have also received the booster vaccine shot to date. "This has enabled healthcare workers to resiliently serve the people of the province through the various stages of the virulent virus," said Limpopo Department of Health Spokesperson, Neil Shikwambana. He said the vaccination of healthcare workers has also served as a precursor of the province Covid-19 vaccination programme, which has seen over 2.1 million people receiving their jab to date, signifying a 51% vaccination rate. "It is through this vaccine that the province and the country have managed to lower the death rate, particularly during the fourth wave," Shikwambana said. He emphasized that as the vaccination program completes a year, it continues to prove that vaccines are the most effective way of fighting the Covid-19 virus. "As such, the department wants to continue to encourage all those who are 12 years and above and have not vaccinated to visit their nearby sites to be vaccinated," he said.

The Limpopo Department of has recorded over 2.1 million vaccinated residents in a year.



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